



Hanford Site Solid (Radioactive and Hazardous) Waste Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (HSW EIS)

Overview

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) has released the final version of the HSW EIS. It addresses the storage, treatment, and disposal of existing and anticipated solid low-level waste (LLW) and mixed low-level-waste (MLLW), the storage and processing of transuranic (TRU) waste, and the disposal of immobilized low-activity waste (ILAW).

This final document is the product of a public process that began in May 2002. This process included the issuance of two documents (a draft and revised draft of the HSW EIS) for public review and comment, twelve public meetings in the states of Washington and Oregon, and consideration of over 5,000 comments received from regulators, tribal nations, stakeholders, and the public.

Issues Identified by the Public on the Revised Draft

In the Spring of 2003, USDOE issued and sought comments on the revised draft of the HSW EIS. It received about 1700 comments focused primarily on the following issues:

- disagreement over importing waste from other DOE sites to Hanford, including the risk of transporting this waste through the states of Washington and Oregon
- concerns about potential impacts to the groundwater and compliance with groundwater protection standards
- health, safety and regulatory concerns regarding long-term impacts and the models used to calculate these impacts
- public involvement concerns, including requests for a longer public comment period and DOE's commitment to openness and public involvement during the decision-making process.

Responses to these comments can be found in the HSW EIS Comment Response Document.

Receiving a Copy of the Final HSW EIS

If you would like a copy of the summary and CD of the full document, please contact Michael Collins (509-376-6536) or michael_s_collins@rl.gov

The final HSW EIS can be viewed on line at <http://www.hanford.gov/eis/eis-0286D2/>

A mixed low-level waste disposal trench



Placing transuranic waste into a TRUPACT-II shipping container for shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico

Fact Sheet

DOE's Preferred Alternative

Based on the results of analyzing environmental impacts, costs, and other considerations, USDOE identified the following preferred alternative in the HSW EIS:

Storage: The Central Waste Complex would continue to be the primary storage facility for LLW, MLLW, and TRU waste. The storage of TRU waste in the Low-Level Burial Grounds would continue until retrieval operations (i.e., digging it up) are complete.

Treatment: LLW and MLLW would be treated using a combination of existing capabilities and processes, offsite commercial capabilities and modifying an existing Hanford facility (T Plant). TRU waste would be processed and certified for shipment to Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico by using a combination of the Waste Receiving and Processing Facility, a modified T Plant, and modular units that expand existing capabilities, i.e., Accelerated Process Lines.

Disposal: LLW, MLLW, ILAW, and contaminated melters (from the Waste Treatment Plant) would be disposed of in a new disposal facility. This new disposal facility would include a regulatory-compliant liner and a collection system for water run off. When this facility is closed, it would be capped with a cover that meets applicable regulatory requirements. The existing Low-Level Burial Grounds will continue to be used until the disposal facility is available and when they are closed they will be capped.

What Happens Next

The USDOE is expected to publish its Record(s) of Decision in March 2004 in the Federal Register. The Record(s) of Decision will identify waste storage, treatment and disposal activities that will be implemented at the Hanford Site.

D0308013.1

Fact Sheet

Department of Energy
P.O. 550 MSIN A7-75
Richland WA, 99352